

(Washington, DC) - Congressman Wally Herger released the following statement on President Bush's seventh State of the Union address:

"The President pointed out that the American economy is weathering some uncertainty, and I believe he is responding appropriately and in a timely fashion. I'm pleased by the bipartisan spirit that the President and House leaders have shown in their pursuit of meaningful tax relief to give the economy a boost. I support giving the American people more of their own money, though I'm skeptical that a one-time rebate will have a profound or lasting impact on our economy. Nonetheless, the measure includes some important tax incentives that can foster job creation and investment, so I plan to vote in favor of it when it comes to the House floor for a vote.

"President Bush was on target in looking at the big picture and stressing that a lower tax burden on American families and businesses is essential to spurring strong economic growth and job creation long into the future. Unfortunately, Democratic leaders have made it clear that they plan to allow this decade's sweeping tax relief to expire, causing an average tax increase of \$1,800 on every American in just three years. This push for higher taxes threatens to undermine our long-term prosperity. We need to permanently extend the tax relief passed since 2001, such as lower marginal income tax rates, lower rates on retirement income and capital gains, and the doubling of the child tax credit to \$1,000.

"I also commend the President for bringing attention to our pending free trade agreements. American consumers benefit from open markets by being able to purchase goods at lower costs, and our producers benefit by having new opportunities to export their products to our trading partners. Exports also have a direct impact on economic growth. In fact, losses from the housing market troubles were overshadowed completely in the 3rd Quarter of 2007 by dynamic growth in U.S. exports, driving 28 percent of our economic growth in that period. Such export growth could contribute even more to our economy if Congress further reduced trade barriers by passing the pending free trade agreements. The Colombia agreement, in particular, would not only strengthen the U.S. economy, but also would bolster our national security by strengthening our ties with a vital ally and undermining Hugo Chavez's push toward socialism in the region.

"Additionally, I applaud the President for reiterating that Congress must responsibly address the out-of-control growth in entitlement spending. The facts are simple -- future generations of Americans will face a financial catastrophe unless Congress reforms Medicare and Social

Security. We must work with a strong bipartisan spirit to save these programs so that today's younger working Americans can enjoy the benefits of the investments they are currently making.

"I commend the President for promising to veto spending bills unless they significantly reduce the number and cost of earmark projects. Although some earmarks do benefit the public by providing funds for needed roads or flood control projects, too many of them waste taxpayer money on unnecessary pork like the infamous "Bridge to Nowhere" in Alaska or the "Woodstock Museum" in New York. The American people deserve a Congress that spends their tax dollars responsibly, and slashing the amount of earmarks will increase the likelihood that Congress spends taxpayer dollars in a way that benefits the public interest."